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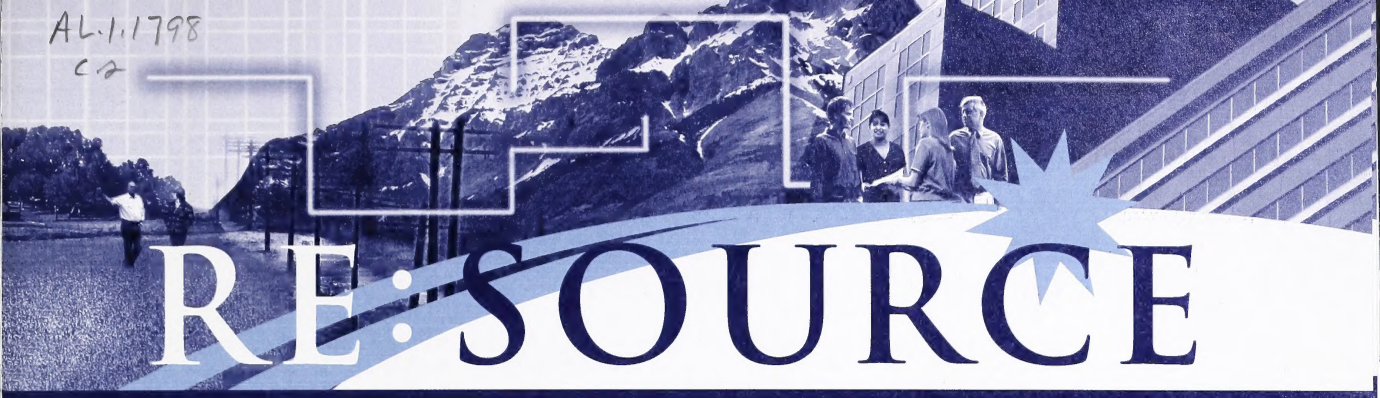

RE:SOURCE

The Newsletter of the Municipal Excellence Network

ISSUE #3
MARCH
2004

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A Network newsletter, news for networking

The Municipal Excellence Network is a powerful resource built through a collaborative partnership between Alberta municipalities, municipal associations and Alberta Municipal Affairs. It's founded upon three cornerstones – people, knowledge assets, and information technology – and serves municipalities by facilitating knowledge transfer and promoting excellence in local government. *Re: source* is the newsletter of the Municipal Excellence Network (MEnet).

More Practices on the Way!

In the previous two phases, you submitted practices in such areas as governance, administration, finance, and human resources. Now, the Network has expanded and you can submit practices on municipal program and service delivery in such areas as infrastructure services, development services, community services and safety services. Since last fall when we started Phase 3, 79 new practices have been posted on the MEnet database thanks to the contributions of everyone in the Municipal Excellence Network. This shows that more of you are finding the Network to be a useful tool in solving municipal issues.

Though we're now focusing on the Phase 3 practice categories mentioned above, we still need practices in the categories emphasized during the first two phases: council, administration, human resources and finance. If your municipality has achieved innovation or efficiency in these categories, please share your practices with the rest of Alberta.

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Municipal Excellence network

Municipalities **sharing knowledge** *to excel*

www.menet.ab.ca

Alberta MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

Check Out These New Practices Just Posted on the Web Site

Thanks to all who have submitted practices. A few that may be of particular interest include:

The Heritage Register and Heritage Management Plan submitted by Sarah Wong from the **Town of Cochrane**. This practice allowed the town to establish a framework to encourage historic resource conservation by balancing incentives and regulations to benefit the entire community. The result is that residents have gained more appreciation of the value of the various historical sites.

The **Property Locator** practice submitted by David Dubauskas from **Strathcona County**. The need for more information on available commercial and industrial property led to the development of the Property Locator, which is an Internet-based mapping application. This site has allowed the county to provide information on local real estate listings, existing businesses, and demographics to potential investors worldwide, 24 hours a day.

Amalgamation of Enforcement Services and the RCMP submitted by Gary Roth of the **City of Grande Prairie**. Through formalizing the link between the two organizations, the city has been able to increase employee morale, clearly outline the departments' roles, and increase the level of customer service. A key result was a change in public opinion toward the Enforcement Services department because of support from the RCMP.

The **Multi-use Utility Recreational Corridor** practice submitted by Kim Heyman from the **County of St. Paul**. This practice relied on cooperation between 10 different municipalities to designate 200 miles of old CN railway line for off-road vehicle use. The results? Residents now have a safe area for recreational use, there is less trespassing on agricultural land, and the region can now promote this trail as a tourist designation for off-road vehicle users.

To view these and many other practices or to find the attached documents, please go to www.menet.ab.ca.

Practice Request Board

Have you been searching for information on a specific municipal practice – searching MEnet, other Internet sources or asking acquaintances for information, but still turning up nothing? Search in vain no more! Just visit the MEnet Practice Request Board and post your query. This tool allows you to request specific information from others around the province. MEnet users can view your request and provide relevant information or post a practice pertaining to that topic.

To access this powerful tool, click on the **View Board** button on the right side of the MEnet home page under the title **Practice Request Board** or go directly to www.menet.ab.ca/forum/default.asp. Anyone can view the board, but you must sign in to post to the board.

So, please view the Practice Request Board if you have questions or answers. Help yourself, help your neighbour.

Municipally Excellent Folks

The unofficial motto of the Municipal Excellence Network is "by the users, for the users, and with the users." This means that you, the users, are the Network's number one asset; you're the key to its success. Accordingly, this section is devoted to those people who are the foundation of the Network. In this issue we profile Jim Woodward, Manager for the County of Athabasca.

Jim started with the county in 1980 as the regional recreation director. By 1987, he became the county manager and has performed ably in this position for the last 17 years. Jim first became involved with the Network before the MEnet Web site existed, during the initial stakeholder consultations. At the time he was the President of the Alberta Rural Municipal Administrators Association and felt that MEnet was "an idea whose time had come."

If Jim needed a solution for an issue, he used to fax out a survey to different municipalities and hope for some sort of response. However, finding useful information was "very hit and miss." He says it was "about time someone thought of doing something like this."

In the municipal world, bad news travels fast, but good news can be the world's best-kept secret. Jim feels that MEnet is important because it addresses this problem. The Network allows others to learn from the good, instead of the bad, and allows each municipality to see where it is innovative.

Meet Jim Woodward, the Manager for the County of Athabasca.

Jim uses the Network for two different purposes. If the county has a particular issue or problem, he looks on the MEnet site for a solution that others have found successful. He also uses it to keep informed about innovations in other municipalities.

According to Jim, the best part of MEnet is the way it offers practical examples from actual situations, not theory. He also likes the opportunity for further clarification on issues because of the contact information on each practice. He thinks that we should continue to promote the Network to help people understand the benefits of tying in to it and states enthusiastically, "it's just the beginning!"

"He thinks we should continue to promote the Network to help people understand the benefits of tying in to it and states enthusiastically, 'it's just the beginning!'"

Jim is a champion of, and an ardent believer in, the Municipal Excellence Network. A contributor to the program since its inception, he's a great example of the first-rate assets this program offers access to.

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2004 Minister's Awards for Municipal Excellence

It's time to start thinking again about how your community demonstrates municipal excellence. The 2004 Minister's Awards for Municipal Excellence will soon be calling for practice submissions. The awards recognize local innovation and achievement in municipal governance, operations and services. They also celebrate the results of effort, goodwill and networking among Alberta's municipal officials as you share your knowledge and wisdom with others.

This year the awards will be presented in four categories, one more than last year.

The Honourable Guy Boutilier, Minister of Municipal Affairs, and Darren Aldous, Chair of the Small Communities Committee of the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, have agreed to add a new Smaller Communities category to recognize the innovation and creativity it takes to meet the unique needs of smaller communities. The other award categories are Partnership, Innovation, and Outstanding Achievement.

Check the Municipal Excellence Web site at www.menet.ab.ca for updates on the 2004 Minister's Awards for Municipal Excellence!

Building the Case for Change

A MEnet Training Session

The Municipal Excellence Team has scheduled three training sessions in March around the province. If you've ever called a colleague down the hall or across the province to ask, "how did you handle this problem?" – this is the workshop for you. We recognize that Alberta municipalities are constantly under pressure! Do things differently, do them better, do more with less, do it all!

This one-day workshop offers practical, proven techniques for identifying and qualifying the right new ideas for your municipality . . . the ideas that can be real opportunities for improvement. The focus is on creating awareness about "leading practices" in Alberta municipalities and building the "case for change" with them. This includes learning how to adapt leading practices to fit needs and obtain results from projects and processes.

See www.menet.ab.ca for more information on workshop times, places and content.

Re:source is published by the Municipal Excellence Network and Alberta Municipal Affairs.
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RESOURCE

ISSUE #1

NOVEMBER 2004

In This Issue

Municipal Practices Keep on Coming

Municipally Excellent Folks

Minister's Awards for Municipal Excellence

Re: source

[illegible]

Practices keep on coming... check out the latest arrivals!

Thanks to you, the people who [illegible] the [illegible] of the [illegible] Network, there are now more than [illegible] municipal practices posted on the [illegible] Web site, with another [illegible] being processed for inclusion in the database. These practices cover eight categories: governance, administration, finance, human resources, infrastructure services, development services, community services and safety services.

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Municipal Excellence